

(2) In the event of the temporary absence or temporary disability of the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Navy shall act for and perform the duties of the Secretary of Defense as Acting Secretary of Defense. In these instances, the designation as Acting Secretary of Defense applies only for the duration of the Secretary's absence or disability, and does not affect the authority of the Secretary to exercise during the absence, or to resume when the disability no longer exists, the powers of his office.

(3) In all other respects, Executive Order 13000 of April 24, 1996, shall remain in effect.

(4) This memorandum shall expire upon the appointment of a Deputy Secretary of Defense, unless sooner terminated by operation of law or by the President.

(5) You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on June 6.

**Remarks at a Dinner for Senator
James M. Talent in St. Louis,
Missouri**
June 2, 2005

Thank you all for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. Please be seated. My arm still hurts from the last time—or one of the last times I came to St. Louis. I tried to fire a 90-mile-an-hour fastball on opening day—[*laughter*]—got up there about 60, maybe. [*Laughter*] But I love coming to your town. Thanks for having me. Thank you all. Those of you who have traveled—I want to thank those of you who traveled from outside this great city of St. Louis to come to support Talent.

The “Show Me” State—my attitude is, show me a good Senator, and I’m going to back him. And we’ve got a great Senator in Jim Talent. I appreciate his spirit. I appreciate his working with the White House. He’s an independent enough guy to tell us if we’re

not doing right. In other words, he is the kind of person you want from a State of strong, independent people, tough, principled, unwilling to yield when he stands for—when he believes he’s correct. And that’s the way Jim Talent is. Every time I’m with him, he’s always talking about the citizens of Missouri. I say, “What about Texas?” He says, “Well, they’re all right down there.” [*Laughter*]

So I’m proud to stand here with him. And I think the people of Missouri will be wise to send this good man back to the United States Senate.

And Talent married well—[*laughter*]—Brenda, I appreciate you being here. It’s good to meet your mother-in-law. It’s a smart thing to bring the mother-in-law through the photo op line. [*Laughter*] Not only is he a good Senator, he’s a smart son-in-law. [*Laughter*] I was also thrilled to meet Michael and Kate and Chrissy, Jim and Brenda’s children. See, what’s important to the Talents is putting their family first. That’s what I like about Jim Talent. He’s got his priorities absolutely straight, faith, family, and the United States of America.

He married well, and so did I. And Laura sends her love to all our friends here in Missouri. You might have noticed that she’s become quite a comedian. [*Laughter*] More importantly, she’s a great First Lady. I was proud of her trip recently to the Middle East. She’s sending a strong message as part of the freedom movement, and that is, you can’t be free unless women have a free role in society. So not only is she a great comedian, she’s a great diplomat. But more importantly, she’s a wonderful mother, wonderful wife, and a great First Lady for the United States.

And I want to thank the senior Senator. That’s appropriate to call you senior, but you are a little older than Talent, at least. [*Laughter*] Kit Bond has served this State with great distinction for a long time. He’s a great friend and a great man. I appreciate you being here, Kit, and his wife, Linda Bond.

And I’m proud of your Governor. It still amazes me that you are old enough to meet the age requirement. [*Laughter*] He’s the youngest looking Governor in America. It turns out he’s a young-looking man who can

get a lot done. And I appreciate your leadership in the statehouse, Matt. Good job. And the Lieutenant Governor is with us, Pete Kinder. I've known Pete a long time, and I appreciate your serving, Pete, and joining Matt and making this State be all that it can be.

I want to thank Congressman Kenny Hulshof as well, and his wife, Renee. Kenny is a bright star in the House of Representatives from the great State of Missouri. I love talking to Kenny. He's a thoughtful fellow. Every time I see him he says, "soybeans." [Laughter]

I thank Mike Gibbons and his wife, Liz. Mike is the State senate president pro tem. I want to thank Rod Jetton, the speaker of the statehouse, and his wife, Cassie. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank all of you all who serve.

Somebody told me they thought Ambassador Danforth would be here tonight. I hope so. I do want to say that he represented our country so well. Jack, thanks for coming, and thanks for serving. Thanks for serving so admirably in the United Nations. As well, thanks for taking on a tough assignment. I asked Jack Danforth from the State of Missouri to help resolve the Sudan civil war, the conflict between north and south. And unfortunately, Darfur has obscured the great progress that Ambassador Danforth made on behalf of peace. And when it's all said and done, Jack, your contribution to helping solve that problem will go down in history as one of the great humanitarian gestures by our country, led ably by you. Thank you, sir.

I want to thank all the folks who helped put on this fundraiser. It's an incredibly successful evening and—which speaks not only to your hard work but also to the admiration that your Senator has earned by the people of Missouri.

We've got a lot to do in Washington. One of the things I like about Talent is he understands that our job in Washington is to confront problems, not pass them on to future Congresses. In my case, to confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents. That's our job. That's what the American people expect from those of us who have been elected. And we've got some problems we got to solve.

Now, we dealt with one of our problems, and that is our economy. We had some tough times for a while because of the enemy attack and the down cycle of our economy. I don't know if you know this or not, but in the last 2 years, we've added over 3.5 million new jobs. More Americans are working today in our country than in the Nation's history. And I appreciate the fact that Jim understands we can't rest, that the job of Government isn't to create the wealth but an environment in which people are willing to risk capital, an environment in which there's a reasonable chance for America to stay competitive in the world.

And one way to do that is to make sure we finally get an energy policy out of the United States Congress. When I first got to Washington, I recognized that our country was too dependent on foreign sources of energy. And so I went to the Congress and said, "Here is a strategy that will encourage more conservation, a strategy that will use research and development dollars to make it more likely we'll have more renewable sources of energy, a strategy that says we can explore for oil and gas in environmentally friendly ways in America, a strategy that recognizes we need to use nuclear power, a strategy that says we need clean coal technology, a strategy that says we can use soybeans to refine biodiesel." It's a smart strategy.

But it's been stuck. There's too much politics in Washington, DC. It's been stuck. They got it out of the House, and thanks to Jim Talent's leadership and Kit Bond's leadership, they're going to get a good bill off the Senate floor. I'm going to sign a bill. For the sake of national security and for the sake of economic security, Congress needs to get me a good energy bill by the recess, by the summer recess break this year.

Jim Talent knows what I know: Smart policy will enable us to grow out of our hydrocarbon society, which we're going to have to do. I went to a refinery in Virginia the other day—it's an unusual kind of refinery; it's a refinery that refines biodiesel—and saw a new C.A.T. engine that can burn 100 percent biodiesel with no exhaust. See, technology is going to enable us to diversify away from our old habits, which will be good for our country, good for our economy. And the United

States Congress can help that diversification process through wise policy. Jim Talent understands that, and I'm going to keep pushing hard to make sure the rest of the United States Senators understand that.

I appreciate the fact that we passed a good, tough budget out of the United States Senate. I hope you appreciate that as well. We've got to show the people of this country that we can be wise about how we spend your money. Notice I didn't say the Government's money—how we spend your taxpayers' money. And so I said to them, "Here's a way to cut our deficit in half, meet our priorities, but it requires fiscal discipline." And I want to thank Jim Talent for his understanding that you can't be all things to all people when it comes time to spending the taxpayers' money. You have to set priorities. You have to have goals, and you must show fiscal discipline. We passed a good budget. I'm looking forward to working with this good Senator to make sure the appropriation process stays stuck to the budget.

I'm also working on Social Security for a reason. The reason is, is that there is a huge problem looming for a younger set of Americans. I just came from Hopkinsville, Kentucky—Hopkington, Kentucky, and I told the people there what I've been telling folks all across the country, that if you get your check, you have nothing to worry about. I mean, the Social Security system is just fine for people receiving their check. But because baby boomers like me are getting ready to retire—see, my retirement age shows up at 2008—[laughter]—which is a convenient year. [Laughter] But the problem for younger workers is there's more than just me retiring. There's a whole slew of us called baby boomers. As a matter of fact, about 73 million of us are set to retire.

To put that in perspective, there's something like 42 million retirees today. And I don't know about the rest of you baby boomers here, but I plan on living longer than the previous generation. As a matter of fact, I'm trying to exercise on a daily basis so that I do live longer. And not only that, but we have been promised greater benefits than the previous generation. So you've got a lot of baby boomers living longer, getting

greater benefits, with fewer people paying into the system.

In 1950—I don't know if you know this or not—but 16 workers paid for every retiree. Today, there's 3.3 workers paying for every retiree. Soon there will be 2 workers paying for every retiree. So we've got a problem, folks. It's not a problem for people who receive their check. It's a problem for people coming up. It's a problem not for the grandparents but the grandchildren.

And so I think now it's time to do something about it, and so does Jim Talent. And I've laid out some proposals. One of them is, why don't we just slow down the growth rate of benefits for some of the wealthier citizens. Their benefits will grow but not quite as fast as Congress of the past thought they ought to grow. It's called progressive indexing, which, by the way, will get most of the problem solved.

I also think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own payroll tax and set up in a voluntary personal savings account. You know why? Right now the Government gets a whopping 1.8 percent on your money when we hold it in the payroll tax. With a conservative mix of bonds and stocks, you can get at least 4½ percent. You compound that difference over time, somebody is going to have a pretty sizable nest egg they can call their own.

The reason I like Jim Talent is because he wants to promote an ownership society in America. He and I reject this business about the investor class only pertains to a certain group of people. We believe everybody in this country ought to own assets. We believe everybody ought to have the ability to pass on their assets to whomever they choose. We know that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America. Now is the time to not only fix Social Security for generations to come but to make Social Security a better deal for all Americans.

And when we get that done, we're going to reform the Tax Code. I put together a group of Democrats and Republicans to make some recommendations. I'm looking forward to seeing what those recommendations are. But I'll tell you one thing: I know I will have a strong ally in Jim Talent

in making sure the Tax Code is more fair, is less large, and accomplishes the mission, and that is to collect revenues for our Government in a fair, honest way.

Do you realize that—I read a report the other day where some person estimated from the IRS that there’s about \$325 billion a year in people avoiding taxes. That just isn’t right. And part of it has to do with the complexities of the Tax Code. For the sake of an economy that grows and for the sake of a better America, we’ve got to reform the Tax Code of the United States, and we will.

I’ve got a good ally in Jim Talent when it comes to legal reform. One sure way to make sure this country isn’t competitive is to allow these frivolous and junk lawsuits to continue to plague people who are trying to run businesses. We got too many lawsuits in America, plain and simple. I want to congratulate Matt for getting good legal reform out of the legislature. We ought to do the same thing in Washington. We got a good class-action reform bill out, and I want to thank Jim for his work on that. I think we’re going to get an asbestos bill out here pretty quick, which would be good news. Got a good bankruptcy bill out.

We need one other bill that’s really important. You know, when I went to Washington, I said, “Well, most of these legal matters can be solved at the State level,” until I began to look at the effect on the Federal budget of these junk and frivolous lawsuits against docs. Because of these lawsuits, doctors either get run out of business, or the premiums go up—which cost you or the taxpayers more money—or they practice defensive medicine in order to stay out of the courts. It’s estimated that these lawsuits cost the Federal Government about \$28 billion a year. That’s a lot. Even for all the money we spend, that’s a lot. *[Laughter]* And it’s not necessary. We want people to have their day in court if they get injured by a lousy doc, but we got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits.

I proposed a good piece of legislation that’s now stuck in the United States Senate. Jim Talent is a strong backer for medical liability reform at the Federal level, and I want to thank him for his support.

I remember when Jim ran for the Senate, he said he would be Missouri’s health care

Senator, and he has kept that promise. We worked together to strengthen Medicare by giving seniors more choices and by modernizing the system to include a prescription drug benefit. Talent understood what I know—what kind of system is it where we pay for surgery from a heart attack but not the medicine to prevent the surgery from being needed in the first place? It was an antiquated, outdated system that needed market incentives in the program and needed to be brought up to date for the sake of our seniors. The Medicare bill that Jim helped pass out of the United States Senate is a good piece of legislation that will mean better quality of life for our seniors in America.

And finally, an issue I know is dear to his heart is association health plans. You know, too many small businesses can’t afford health insurance for their employees. And there’s a practical way to deal with the problem, and that is to allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies get to do. It is a sensible approach to helping deal with health care costs. It makes a lot of sense. Talent is the author of that idea on the Senate floor, and I look forward to working with him to get association health care plans past. And I want to thank you for your leadership on that issue.

There’s a lot of issues that we could be talking about here, and he said, when I got up here, he said, “Make sure you keep it relatively short. These people paid a lot of money.” *[Laughter]* I do want to talk about a couple of other things, though. Because of Jim Talent’s leadership and steadfast support, our party will continue to support faith-based and community groups as a way to help heal hurt in America.

You know, I gave a speech the other day at Calvin College, and I talked about Alexis de Tocqueville. He had interesting observations about America in 1832. He talked about the strength of America being in the souls of our citizens and that people were able to find great comfort and solace and strength through civic organizations, voluntary organizations where people come together to help heal the hurts of society. That was true in 1832, and it’s darn sure true today in 2005. The strength of this country lies in the hearts

and souls of our citizens. And the Federal Government should not fear—should not fear—the presence of faith to help deal with social problems, as a matter of fact, ought to welcome faith programs and to help deal with social problems.

I appreciate Jim's willingness to join me in promoting a culture of life in America. I want to thank Jim for helping defend the institution of marriage from being redefined by activist judges. And speaking about judges—[laughter]—I want to thank both Senators from Missouri for understanding that every nominee a President sends up must have a fair hearing in the Judiciary Committee, an expeditious hearing in the Judiciary Committee and then an up-or-down vote on the floor of the United States Senate.

I nominated a fantastic woman named Priscilla Owen over 4 years ago to the bench, Fifth Court. She's a fantastic lady, tops in her law school class. In our State, you got to run for Supreme Court, and she ran for Supreme Court, got endorsed by Republicans and Democrats, won something like 80 percent of the State because she's a great judge. For 4-long years her nomination was held up for pure partisan reasons—4 years—and finally, as a result of never giving up and being steadfast and strong, she got her vote. I want to thank Senators Talent and Bond for supporting this great woman.

We got another confirmation that needs to get done too. It's time for the United States Senate to stop playing pure politics, stall politics, and give John Bolton an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. People look at the Government and say, "What's going on with all this filibustering? Why can't people come together and do what's right for the country?" Listen, the United Nations needs reform, and I've got a man who can go up there and reform it. And John Bolton needs a vote. People are tired of this. And I appreciate the folks in Missouri sending a strong message to Washington: Focus on the people's business; stop playing politics; get something done for the good of the country. And that's the attitude Jim Talent brings to the Senate floor, and I appreciate that a lot.

Jim Talent also understands the war on terror goes on. He's a strong, strong supporter of our military, and I want to thank

you for that. You know, we have a duty to make sure these troops get the best possible equipment and the best possible training. And we're fulfilling that obligation. You know, our strategy is clear on the war on terror. We're going to find them overseas so we don't have to find them—face them here at home. We will defeat them there in order to protect the homeland. The only way to defend America is to stay on the offense against these people, and that's exactly what the United States of America will continue to do.

There are two ways to stay on the offense. One is through good intelligence and good movement of troops and good work with the allies. And there's another way to stay on the offense against the terrorists, and that's to spread freedom. There's nothing that frightens these ideological killers more than democracy. It scares them a lot. They can't survive in a democracy. They can survive in places where tyrants have discouraged hope, suppressed people. They can't survive in an open society. See, they can't stand the light of freedom.

And so our strategy is twofold. One, we'll be tough as heck and stay on the offense, but we will also have great faith in the capacity of freedom to transform hateful societies to hopeful societies, to transform the conditions that create hate to the conditions that create hope. And that's what you're seeing around the world. It's a fantastic period in American history.

If you've got young children, I hope you explain to them what they're seeing. Think about the people in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that those poor people lived under the barbaric clutches of the Taliban. These people were so barbaric that young girls weren't even allowed to go to school, and if their mothers dared speak out, they were taken to the public square and whipped.

We liberated Afghanistan for our own sake. Remember, Afghanistan was the home of Al Qaida and its training camps. I laid out a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're as guilty as the terrorists." And we told the Taliban to get rid of Al Qaida, and they wouldn't do it, and so it's important that when you say something, you mean it. It's

important that when you say you're going to do it that you go ahead and do it, for the sake of peace. And we did. But as importantly, 25 million people were liberated in Afghanistan. It's fantastic to think about that.

I've had a lot of friends go over to Afghanistan, and Karen Hughes was there early on after the liberation, and she went again. And Laura has been over. And they say that the change is noticeable. Life is coming back, and people are excited.

I'll tell you a great American story. My barber was raised in Afghanistan. And she came over here to—there was a revolution or civil war or whatever you want to call it, and she decided to stay in America, raised her three kids here, and used her great talents and enthusiasm for her country to raise money to build two schools. Think about that. What kind of a country is it where you got a barber to the President working hard, using her influence and her contacts and her friends to raise money—quite a bit of money, by the way—to build schools in a faraway country, spectacular country that encourages compassion not only at home but abroad. Afghanistan is changing for the better, and as it does, the world will be more peaceful.

Listen, we got rid of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Saddam Hussein was a threat to peace. Iraq is changing. I'm sure you were amazed, as was much of the world, at the 8½ million people who defied the car bombers and the killers and the suiciders to say as loud as they possibly can, "You will not prevent us from voting and exercising our rights as free citizens." What a spectacular moment in history.

And now we're standing with the Government as they struggle against these suiciders. But they're getting there. And our mission is clear there as well, and that is to train the Iraqis so they can do the fighting, make sure they can stand up to defend their freedoms, which they want to do. And then our troops are coming home with the honor they earned. And the world will be better off with a free Iraq and a free Afghanistan in the broader Middle East.

Ukraine had a freedom revolution. Lebanon is now having a freedom revolution. Listen, freedom is on the march. And the role of the United States of America is to stand with freedom lovers and reformers and

believers in the power of democracy. And when we do so and as we do so, we'll leave a foundation of peace behind for our children and grandchildren.

We're living in a fantastic period in world history. And I want to thank Jim Talent for understanding the great opportunities America has to leave the world a better place for generations coming up.

Again, I want to thank you for supporting this good man. He's—like we used to say in Texas, when you find a good one, keep him. You got a great Senator in Jim Talent. I thank you for recognizing his talents. I thank you for contributing to his campaign. I thank you for talking up his good work in the coffee shops all around the State of Missouri. You don't have to worry about him; he'll be out right behind you, working hard to make sure that in this reelection campaign—the citizens of this State do the right thing.

It's an honor to be your President. I'd like to stay a little longer, but I'm headed to Crawford. I appreciate your warm reception. God bless you, and God bless our great country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. at the Millennium Hotel St. Louis. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Matt Blunt and Lt. Gov. Peter D. Kinder of Missouri; Karen Hughes, former Counselor to the President; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Certifying Exports to the People's Republic of China

June 2, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105-261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of the following items is not detrimental to the United States space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China.